

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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EO 11652: NA
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SUBJ: BLACK ALLIANCE HOLDS THIRD GENERAL MEETING

REF: CAPE TOWN 542

1. SUMMARY: THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE (SABA), RECENTLY HELD ITS THIRD GENERAL MEETING SINCE ITS FORMATION EARLIER THIS YEAR. ONE NEW MEMBER, THE SWAZI HOMELAND'S ONLY PARTY, WAS ADMITTED. THE MEETING, HOSTED BY THE INDIAN REFORM PARTY, INCLUDED AN AFTERNOON-LONG CLOSED WORKING SESSION AT A DURBAN HOTEL AND A SUNDAY "PRAYER MEETING" ADDRESSED BY LEADERS OF ALL PARTICIPATING PARTIES. THE DELIBERATIONS WERE APPARENTLY AMICABLE AND FRUITFUL, PRODUCING SEVERAL RESOLUTIONS COMMITTING SABA TO UNDERTAKE SPECIFIC PROJECTS INCLUDING TWO WITH SOME INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. THE "PRAYER MEETING", HOWEVER, AS AN EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE REFORM PARTY WHICH WAS ONLY ABLE TO GENERATE ACROWD OF SOME 500 INDIANS IN THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST (300,000) INDIAN TOWNSHIP. ONLY INKATHA'S ORGANIZATION, WHICH BROUGHT IN AN ESTIMATED

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3000-4000 BLACKS, SAVED THE RALLY FROM BEING A COMPLETE EMBARRASSMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE THIRD GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE (SABA) TOOK PLACE IN DURBAN JULY 22-23 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE INDIAN REFORM PARTY. BESIDES INKATHA AND THE COLORED LABOR PARTY, THE DIKOAKOENTLE PARTY OF THE QWA QWA

HOMELAND WAS PRESENT AND THE RULING PARTY OF THE KANGWANE (SWAZI) HOMELAND WAS ADMITTED AS A MEMBER.

3. THE CLOSED DELIBERATIONS ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON WERE DESCRIBED TO CONOFFS AS AMICABLE AND SUCCESSFUL BY OFFICIALS OF THE THREE MAJOR PARTIES. CHIEF BUTHELEZI CHAIRED THE PROCEEDINGS AND TOLD US HE WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY THE LEVEL AND TONE OF THE DISCUSSIONS AS WELL AS THE IDEAS PRESENTED. THE PARTIES HANDLED THE POTENTIALLY CONTENTIOUS QUESTION OF SABA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN SA BY AGREEING TO DISAGREE ON THE ISSUE, WHICH MEMBERS DETERMINED WAS NOT CENTRAL TO THE PURPOSE OF THE ALLIANCE. (FYI: INKATHA AND THE INDIAN REFORM PARTY SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF INVESTMENT WHILE THE COLORED LABOR PARTY OPPOSES IT. END FYI). SEVERAL RESOLUTIONS WERE APPROVED INCLUDING:
--- APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE AND REPORT BACK AT THE NEXT MEETING ON CONSTITUTIONAL MODELS, WHICH COULD BE USED AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION AT A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE.

--- A PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATION "WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WITH A VIEW OF GAINING SUPPORT FOR ITS STAND".

--- REITERATION OF SABA'S INVITATION TO ALL BLACK GROUPS TO JOIN IT.

--- A PROPOSAL CALLING FOR A "SOUTHERN AFRICAN STATES TREATY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONFERENCE". TO THIS END SABA PROPOSED STEPS BE TAKEN TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR AN APPROACH TO HEADS OF STATE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL.

--- URGING BLACKS NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE "MILITARY DEFENSE OF THE APARTHEID REGIME".

4. THE QUESTION OF SABA PARTICIPATION IN INKATHA'S NEWLY PROPOSED PLAN TO MONITOR FOREIGN LABOR CODES WAS NOT MENTIONED IN THE RESOLUTIONS AND BUTHELEZI DECLINED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE. HOWEVER IN HIS RALLY SPEECH HE INDICATED HE ENVISAGED PARTICIPATION BY OTHER SABA MEMBERS IN THE EXPLOITATION OF THEIR JOINT POWER IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. IN HIS ADDRESS BUTHELEZI ALSO OPINED THAT THE CONCEPT OF A CONSOCIATIONAL STATE, AS PROPOSED AT THE RECENT BERGESTRAESSER INSTITUTE MEETING (DURBAN 366) WAS A VIABLE MODEL WHICH HE HOPED THE SABA COMMITTEE WOULD STUDY (THEREBY PROBABLY PREORDAINING THE COMMITTEE' CONSLUDION).

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5. THE SUNDAY RALLY, CALLED A "PRAYER MEETING" TO FACILITATE OBTAINING A PERMIT, WAS HELD AT A SPORTS FIELD IN SA'S LARGEST INDIAN COMMUNITY, CHATSWORTH. THE REFORM PARTY, HOWEVER, GENERATED LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE MEETING AMONG INDIANS. IT APPARENTLY POSTED FEW NOTICES AND DISTRIBUTED LITTLE PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION. SEVERAL INDIAN REPORTERS TOLD CONOFFS INDIAN AND WHITE PRESS BURIED THE STORIES OF THE PROPOSED RALLY IN OBSCURE CORNERS OF THE PAPERS BECAUSE OF POLICY DECISIONS BY THEIR EDITORS, AT LEAST SOME OF WHOM FEARED ANTAGONIZING THE SAG. AT BEST ONLY 500 INDIANS TURNED UP AT THE RALLY, MANY APPARENTLY CURIOUS SUNDAY DRIVERS WHO SOON LEFT. ONLY INKATHA'S ORGANIZATION, WHICH MUSTERED 3000-4000 ENTHUSIASTIC PARTY MEMBERS, INCLUDING A BUSLOAD FROM JOHANNESBURG, SAVED THE RALLY FROM BEING A PROFOUND EMBARRASSMENT FOR SABA. COMMENT: THE REFORM PARTY'S POOR PERFORMANCE UNDERSCORES MORE THE POLITICAL ENNUI IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE THAN FAILINGS OF THE REFORM PARTY ITSELF, THOUGH THE LATTER'S LACK OF A GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION (DURBAN A-43) CLEARLY HAMPERED ITS ATTEMPTS TO GENERATE INTEREST IN THE MEETING. FOR EXAMPLE, THE REFORM PARTY'S PRINCIPAL RIVAL,

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THE NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS, WAS ALSO ABLE TO MUSTER ONLY A FEW HUNDRED FOLLOWERS TO ITS LAST ANNUAL MEETING.

6. PRIOR TO THE RALLY, PHONED DEATH THREATS REPORTEDLY WERE MADE AGAINST BUTHELEZI AND A REFORM PARTY LEADER, ARMICHAND RAJBANSI. IN ADDITION, THOUSANDS OF PAMPHLETS WERE DISBRIBUTED AT TRAIN STATIONS IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS STATING "WARNING. GATSHA - YOU AND YOUR ZULU DOGS STAY AWAY - YOU ARE NOT WANTED. CHATSWORTH BELONGS TO THE INDIANS. STAY AT HOME OR DIE." INKATHA WAS CONCERNED BY THE THREATS AND HAD A SECURITY CORDON AROUND BUTHELEZI AT THE RALLY.

7. COMMENT: SABA'S MAIN FOCUS CONTINUES TO BE THE CONVENING OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SA. HOWEVER, THE TWO RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING CONSULTATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND A MEETING WITH SOUTHERN AFRICAN LEADERS INDICATE A BROADENING OF THEIR PERSPECTIVE AS WELL AS AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE INTERNATIONAL NOTICE AND GAIN MOMENTUM WITHOUT PROVIDING THE SAG WITH JUSTIFICATION FOR ACTING AGAINST THEM UNDER THE POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ACT. CONOFFS WERE TOLD BY LEADERS OF ALL THREE PARTIES THAT THEY CONSIDERED THE RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION IN PARTICULAR TO BE SIGNIFICANT BUT DECLINED TO ELABORATE. BUTHELEZI HIMSELF DID NOT EXPAND ON THIS IN BRIEF CONVERSATION CONOFFS HAD WITH HIM AFTER THE MEETING.

8. ALLIANCE MEMBERS IN GENERAL APPEAR TO LOOK TO BUTHELEZI AS THE LEADER, SPOKESMAN AND DRIVING FORCE IN SABA. HOWEVER CONOFFS NOTICED THAT SOME COLORED LEADERS SEEMED BORED AND SOMEWHAT DISENCHANTED WITH BUTHELEZI AND ONE, AFTER SESSION ENDED, WAS OVERHEARD SUGGESTING TO BUTHELEZI THAT THE NEXT MEETING BE HELD IN FIVE MONTHS INSTEAD OF THE USUAL TWO OR THREE. AS THE LABOR PARTY AND INKATHA ARE THE KEYSTONES OF SABA, SUCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DISENCHANTMENT COULD HAVE UNFAVORABLE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE.
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